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ABSTRACT

Since 1974, New Jersey board of education members' responsibilities have increased in direct proportion to major legislative actions and mandates affecting the state's public schools. This revised pamphlet was written to help new board members carry out their responsibilities. The first chapter outlines board members' authority as elected state officials, policymakers, and representatives in the educational governance chain. Chapter 2 describes board meeting procedures, including selection of officers, the Sunshine Law (the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975), group and individual member rights, the committee system, and basic parliamentary procedure. Chapter 3 explains the board's relationship with school executives and important facts concerning staff evaluation, management team-building, superintendent selection, and the chain of command. Chapter 4 treats curricular matters, while chapter 5 discusses student rights related to corporal punishment, freedom of speech, student records, searches, and special education. Chapter 6 discusses budgetary matters, and chapter 7 handles building and maintenance functions. Chapter 8 is devoted to labor relations, highlighting collective bargaining, negotiating teams, contract administration, and related procedures. Chapter 9 discusses public relations issues, and chapter 10 describes the New Jersey School Boards Association's functions and services. (MLH)

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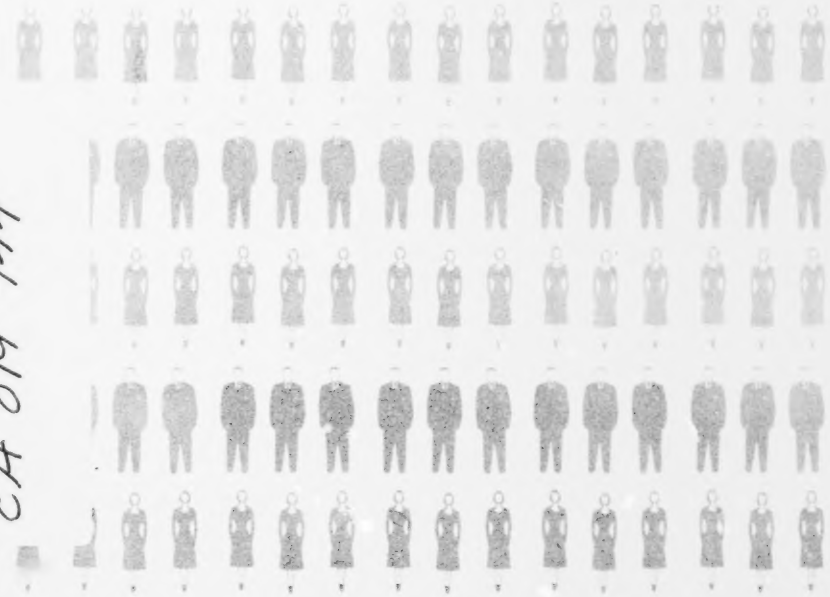

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TOBY R. SIMON

School Board Library Series Volume 3

BASIC BOARDSMANSHIP

By Toby R. Simon

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BASIC BOARDSMANSHIP
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OBLITI PRIVATORUM
PUBLICA CURATE

(Forget your own affairs and think only of public concerns)

Great Council Room
Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia
1435

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FOREWORD

The first edition of *Basic Boardsmanship* was published in 1974. It informed board members of the duties and responsibilities of the job they had taken on by virtue of their election or appointment to a board of education.

Since 1974, there have been major legislative actions and numerous legal decisions which have had an impact on public education in New Jersey. The responsibilities of board members have increased in direct proportion to these new laws and mandates. This new version of *Basic Boardsmanship* reflects these changes. It also expands on those issues with which boards are constantly dealing, the policies needed, the procedures recommended, and the relationships involved.

We hope that the knowledge and skills contained in this book help you who are giving so much of your time and effort for the children of New Jersey.

Octavius T. Reid, Jr.
Executive Director
New Jersey School Boards Association

Trenton, New Jersey
April, 1986

INTRODUCTION

When I first wrote *Basic Boardsmanship* in 1979, the responsibilities of a board of education were just beginning a growth spurt which continues today, in 1986, at an almost geometric rate.

The wave of public interest in education, which began with *A Nation At Risk,* has certainly had an effect on the role of a board and the depth of its immersion in educational issues. State government has increased its activities—getting involved in teacher salaries, high school graduation standards, and the training and supervision of teachers and principals among other things. This involvement has made it important for boards to be aware of the impact that state mandates and regulations will have on their districts in these and other areas.

A Nation At Risk and the reports which followed have also raised public concern about the schools. Citizens are demanding accountability for their tax dollar in the form of good teachers who turn out well-educated students prepared to take an effective place in society.

This revised version of *Basic Boardsmanship* will help new board members take up the responsibilities facing them. New information will be found throughout the book with counsel focusing on the board's role as a policymaker at the top of the school system's governance chain.

I hope you find the book a help as you begin what I believe is one of the most important roles that an elected official can perform—that of ensuring our children get an education which will give them a solid basis on which to build their future.

Toby R. Simon
Trenton, New Jersey
March, 1986

1 THE AUTHORITY OF A BOARD OF EDUCATION

THE EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE CHAIN

Board of education members are elected *state* officials. The New Jersey Constitution clearly and unequivocally places prime and absolute responsibility for education upon the State Legislature. The Legislature may not delegate or abdicate to others its exclusive function to make the law, but it may delegate to governmental agencies or public officials the power and function to make subordinate rules or orders within the standards and policies of the Legislature. To the extent that "local control" has been taken to mean that the educational function of government is controlled exclusively at the local level, the notion of home rule is a myth. In fact, New Jersey's educational system is based on a concept of *lay* control, not *local* control, and the exercise of that power is shared among officials at all levels of government, including board of education members.

The general supervision and control of public education, except for higher education, is vested in the state board of education. This board consists of the chancellor of higher education, who is a member without vote; the chairman of the board of higher education or his designee, who must be a member of that board; and twelve persons appointed by the governor with the consent of the senate for six-year terms. The commissioner of education is appointed by the governor with the consent of the senate for a five-year term. The commissioner is the secretary of the state board and administers the state department of education.

Each of the 21 New Jersey counties has a county superintendent, appointed by the commissioner with the consent of the state board for a three-year term. The county superintendents are required to examine all the schools under their jurisdiction to see that they are following state laws and regulations. They must keep informed of districts' personnel certifications, courses of study, budgets, and building conditions. They report annually to the commissioner.

There are almost 600 operating school districts in New Jersey and each is governed through the supervision and control of a local board of education. Of these, 549 are elected boards, the rest having their members appointed by the mayor of their community. Since these boards are created by statute to perform a state function at a local level, their powers are

derived from the Legislature and not from the people in their local community. Boards of education can perform only those acts for which express or implied authority exists in state law or in the rules and regulations of the state board of education. Boards, by law, must meet at least once every two months to transact business, though the general practice is a formal monthly meeting with weekly work meetings.

New Jersey's education laws contain special provisions for the maintenance of vocational education at the county level. Such vocational districts also have boards of education. County special services schools for the education of handicapped children may also be established by a county board of chosen freeholders.

THE BOARD AS POLICY MAKER

The board is a policy-making body. The board of education makes policies and the administrators implement those policies to run the schools. An effective board member understands the difference between policy and administration.

What is policy? The word is often misused to mean understandings, regulations, traditions, or statutes. A board member will say, "Our board has a policy of trying not to let our meetings run too late." What he really means is that they have an understanding or a practice.

A policy is not a precise course of action; the precise course of action is administrative. A policy is not a restatement of statute, although all policies must comply with the law. A policy is not a routine board decision, although all decisions should come from board policy. A policy is not a job description or personnel procedure, nor is it a board bylaw.

The NJSBA Delegate Assembly of May, 1976, said:

> *A school board policy is a statement of a district's philosophy and goals for a specific topic. The statement should include what the policy is, its purpose, and who it will affect.*
>
> *Administrative rules and regulations should be drafted under the direction of the chief school administrator to implement the philosophy and goals of the policy statement. They should indicate a method of evaluation and are subject to final approval by the board of education.*
>
> *The school district policy manual, in order to be pertinent and effective, should be reviewed and evaluated every year.*

Policy is the written expression of the board's desires for the district's children. The policy statements of a board serve as a guide for the administrators, providing them with direction, a secure basis for decision

making, and an imperative for action. A clearly defined and expressed policy helps eliminate ambiguity and confusion between the board and its chief administrator and goes a long way toward insuring a smoothly operating school system.

Very simple. Very obvious. Very straightforward. Absolutely not! Everybody may agree with the above, but the problem for boards and their administrators lies in determining where policy making ends and administration begins. The line separating policy and administration is like the equator. You know it is there, but you can't see it. Because it can't be seen, board members and administrators may place it in different places for different issues, depending on their own beliefs and biases. Sometimes policy expands into administration or vice versa; sometimes the two seem to merge and become one.

Indeed the line will change from district to district. What may be the board's policy-making prerogative in District A may be left strictly to the superintendent in District B. And where District C administrators may have free rein on an issue, District D board members will make sure that area falls within their policy-making authority.

The proper development, use, and annual revision of a policy book will do more than anything else to cut down on misunderstandings. It is important to note that the policy manual is not a static document. Constant review and updating are necessary to keep it current with law and district practice. One of the most important functions of a board is to review their policy book on at least a yearly basis.

BOARD MEMBER AS REPRESENTATIVE

New board members are sometimes reluctant to participate fully in board discussions. They feel their inexperience disqualifies them in some way. Not true! Your ability to make decisions is as good as anyone else's. Diligent reading of materials sent to board members prior to meetings and close attention to and participation in discussions are what is important. Your opinion, always open to others' views, is as valid as the longest serving member's. Keep informed, take an active interest in learning, don't be shy about asking questions, and you will quickly take your place as an effective board member.

Whom do you represent in your role as a board member? Some people run for board positions because they want to represent a particular group or point of view. Others may have been appointed to the board to provide "balance".

If you think that your role on the board is to represent specific groups or particular interests—forget it! All board members represent their entire district, not just the area in which they live or where their supporters

are. Many times you may be torn between programs your supporters favor and programs which truly serve the greater need. You must remember that the welfare of the district as a whole should never be sacrificed for one portion. You are a state official, after all, responsible equally to all your community's citizens and for the education of all your district's students.

2 THE BOARD MEETING

THE ORGANIZATION MEETING

It all begins at the organization meeting of the board. The Legislature specifically delegates to local boards the right to govern themselves, and it is at this yearly meeting that the board members decide who their officers will be for the coming year.

First, the new and re-elected members take their oaths of office from the board secretary. They swear to "faithfully, impartially, and justly...support and uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey." Then, elections are held for a board president and vice president.

The experienced board members should have taken the time, prior to the meeting, to explain to new members how they select their officers. Some boards have a policy, written or unwritten, that the vice president automatically moves up to the presidency. On some boards, the current president continues in office unless he is defeated or doesn't run again. Others have a rotation system of one kind or another. Most boards, however, have an open process where anyone interested is eligible; nominations are taken, discussion is held, and the majority elects the new officers.

There may be heavy politicking or a general consensus about who should be president. Some board members actively seek the position and find it very rewarding. There are no rules about who should be elected. Because the president is the major spokesperson for the board, however, and because he is most responsible for seeing that board meetings run efficiently, there are certain qualities that the person holding that office should have. Certainly a willingness to encourage and listen to all points of view, a readiness to work well with the superintendent, and an ability to communicate with the public are three of the more important qualities.

The authority and rights of a board president are no greater or less than the authority and rights of any individual member. The president continues to cast a vote on all issues. He is, however, in frequent contact with the chief school administrator to develop agendas and discuss long range plans for board meetings. Letters intended for all board members

may often be mailed to the board president. Such items should be shared routinely with the rest of the board at their regular meetings.

THE SUNSHINE LAW

In October, 1975, the Open Public Meetings Act, commonly known as the Sunshine Law, went into effect in New Jersey. The Sunshine Law covers all public bodies organized by law and empowered to spend public funds or affect people's rights. Except for specific listed exemptions, all discussions and official actions of the public body must take place in public. The community is allowed to hear all deliberations dealing with policy formation and decision making. The specific exemptions cover those matters where the public interest would be endangered or personal privacy or guaranteed rights of an individual invaded. In passing the law, the Legislature commented that secrecy in government undermines public faith and limits public participation in affairs which concern them. All board of education meetings are covered by the Sunshine Law if they are open to or attended by a majority of the board members.

Questions frequently arise concerning board committees. Must their meetings be open to the public? If a committee meeting is open to a majority of the board, even if a majority does not actually attend the meeting, then that meeting must be open to the public. If less than a majority of the board *may* attend, then the meeting can be closed. This assumes, however, that the nature of the committee's work is to investigate, study, and report back to the full board any recommendations for action. If a committee is empowered to take action, their meetings must be open to the public no matter how many board members are there.

Requiring that the public be allowed to attend a meeting does not mean that the public must be allowed to speak at that meeting. A board of education always retains the authority to permit, regulate, or prohibit active participation by the public at its meetings. To assist in compliance with the Sunshine Law and to make its procedures clear to its public, a board should include in its policy manual statements concerning public participation at meetings. Procedures should be written explaining how people can address the board, at what times during meetings they may speak, and how the agenda will be distributed to the community.

More detailed information on the specifics of the law can be found in the Association's publication, *Focus On: Open Public Meetings Act.*

THE BOARD MEMBER AS GROUP MEMBER

An individual member of a board of education has no legal status other than that of any ordinary citizen except when sitting with the rest of the

board in a legally constituted meeting! Outside of such meetings, members neither speak for other board members nor can they represent the board as a whole anywhere unless formally deputized to do so.

A board, by law, must work together to make decisions. Thus, how they function as a group often determines how successful their deliberations are and whether their decisions will actually improve the education offered their students. Members come on a board with many differences, but their combination can create a whole which is more than the sum of its parts. An understanding of group process by all members is vital to the effective functioning of this whole called a board of education.

Board members have diverse backgrounds and opinions, and they will not always be in agreement on issues that come before them. Each member of a board has the responsibility to see that disagreements stay on the issues and do not become personal animosities. Each member has an equal right to be heard and to agree or dissent as his conscience dictates. Once a decision is reached, however, all members should support it. Nothing is more damaging to a board and the reputation of everyone on it than for individual board members to quarrel publicly with decisions that the board has made. Such action throws doubt on all of the board's efforts, even those the dissenter may support, and creates in the community's mind an image of an ineffectual, combative group.

BOARD OF THE WHOLE OR THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

Most nine-member boards in New Jersey use the committee system, five-member boards usually function as a committee of the whole, and the few seven-member boards in the state generally adopt the committee system.

In colonial times, all schools were run on the committee system. There were no administrators or principals, and local boards were formed to perform the administrative duties. As the amount of such work increased, boards divided into committees which were variously responsible for deciding on curriculum, selecting books, examining and employing teachers, purchasing supplies, maintaining buildings and performing other tasks as necessary. As districts grew in size, lay board members no longer had the time to administer their schools. Professionals were hired to take over the actual supervision and running of the schools, leaving board members to determine policy and deal with the broad governance issues.

Boards who work as a whole believe that all members should receive the same information at the same time, discussing the issues and alternatives together in order to come to a mutual decision. Staff members are expected to gather necessary information, investigate alternatives, and bring these to the board for debate and eventual action. As the professional in charge of the district, the superintendent is asked for a recommendation on each issue. The board's role as policymaker is clear and it

is less likely to get involved in administrative matters.

Boards who operate by the committee system believe that the special talents of board members are better used and that special investigations of topics can be done without taking up the time of the full board.

The issue is not really which system is better, but which one works best for each individual board. Whichever is selected, care must be taken that it serves its purpose of ensuring that the board is making good decisions based on good information.

Boards working as a whole must insist that their administrators bring them all relevant information necessary for them to decide an issue—and not just that information which supports the superintendent's recommendation. Boards working with committees must insist that these committees bring them alternatives for action and that committee members not get upset if their recommendations are overturned by the full voting board.

Boards working with committees must be sure that the policy book includes statements outlining the responsibilities of each committee in relation to the entire board and to the administration. A clear and precise delineation of the committee purpose, function and scope should be provided to all board members and the superintendent. The committee should know how it is to relate to administrators and how it is to report its investigations and recommendations to the board.

Typical committees which a board might have include curriculum, building and grounds, finance, policy, and personnel. Boards should guard against proliferation of committees. They tend to duplicate efforts and make busy work for board members while taking staff members away from responsibilities more closely related to the education of children.

Whether boards work as a whole or with committees, no member should ever find himself voting on an issue without being convinced that he has all the information necessary to make an informed decision.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Parliamentary procedure is not a four letter word, but reaction to it is often the same as if it were. "Too complicated!" "Unnecessary!" "Stifles discussion!" These are some examples of the reactions one gets to parliamentary procedure.

In reality, legislative groups of all kinds have found it desirable to employ a set of rules of procedure to govern their deliberations. Boards of education are no exception. Such rules serve very real and necessary functions in the workings of a board.

The purposes of parliamentary procedure are to give each member an equal right to be heard, to determine the will of the majority, and to protect the rights of the minority. Three fundamental principles underlie parliamentary procedure.

First, the majority rules. All of the time. Not only when you agree with it. The majority will is essentially absolute, but there is an important exception—our second principle.

This second principle states that individuals have rights which no majority may deny. These rights continue to exist even when they are inconvenient or unpopular, or even if they appear to threaten the majority.

The element of conflict in these first two principles is reconciled by the third: the minority abides by the majority decision until the next majority is formed. Today's minority view can become tomorrow's majority opinion. Thus the process is more important than the outcome of any particular issue. Every single technical requirement of parliamentary law, every single procedural guarantee is there for only one reason—it protects or enhances or promotes one or another of these three fundamental principles.

For the purposes of a board of education, it is easier to discuss an issue when that discussion follows a motion which lays out the matter clearly. Debate organized around parliamentary rules facilitates the taking of accurate minutes by the board secretary. And, mutually understood voting procedures allow board and community to know where each member stands on the issues.

Boards should name in policy the parliamentary guide they will follow. It need not be *Robert's Rules of Order. Parliamentary Procedure At A Glance* by O. Garfield Jones, published by Hawthorne Books, New York, is a compact, simplified standard suited to smaller groups like boards of education.

Boards should also adopt a policy indicating what they want an abstention to mean. Due to a conflict of interest or their absence during discussions leading up to a vote, board members may occasionally wish to indicate "not voting" when an issue comes up for decision. Without a written policy of what a board wants such abstentions to mean, the commissioner of education has determined in the past that such abstentions should be counted with the majority opinion. By adopting a policy stating that an abstention is to be counted as "no vote", the board would be certain that its desires in that area would pertain.

Boards should have their own set of written rules, of course. Known as bylaws, these rules cover the conduct of board meetings, membership and responsibilities of board committees, authority and length of term of the president, and procedures for election of board officers. The customs of a local district provide guidelines to its operations.

THE BOARD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF

3

THE ROLE OF THE CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

The relationship between the board and its chief school administrator is one of the most critical factors in determining how well the school system operates. Boards should trust their superintendents, have respect for their professional training and experience, be confident in their ability to run the district, and require their recommendations on issues under discussion. Superintendents in turn should give boards their loyalty, their best advice based on educational considerations, and provide competent and effective management of the schools. In working together, both boards and superintendents must be conscious of the other's role and areas of responsibility.

Most often, when conflicts arise between a board and its superintendent, it is because of a misunderstanding or disagreement about whose responsibility it is to carry out a task or make a decision. A clear understanding of the role of the superintendent will go a long way in preventing such misunderstandings.

This role can be divided generally into three areas. The superintendent is the chief advisor to the board of education, he is the executive officer of the school district, and he is the educational leader of the community.

As the chief advisor to the board, the superintendent should be consulted for background materials, alternatives, suggestions, and recommendations before any decisions are made by the board. He will bring to the attention of the board those issues which need deliberation and action. He must keep the board briefed on district operations and may ask other staff to attend board meetings to give reports on particular items. The superintendent should keep the board informed of problems occurring in the district, especially if they are likely to turn up in the form of community protests at meetings. (In turn, board members should let the superintendent know when they hear of an incident which is likely to come up in public.) School board members and administrators both react more reasonably and calmly when prepared. The bottom line for both should be "no surprises!"

As chief advisor, the superintendent should also take the lead, along

with the board president, in helping new board members acquire the information they need to effectively take up their responsibilities. Minutes from the past year, copies of all negotiated contracts, their own copy of the district's policy manual, staff handbook and administrative guide, and current budget information should be provided to the new member as soon as possible after the election. The superintendent and board president should meet with the new members and bring them up to date on current district issues.

New Jersey Administrative Code 18A:17-20 states that the superintendent "shall have a seat on the board or boards of education employing him and the right to speak on all education matters at meetings of the board or boards but shall have no vote." Because of this legally established position, and because he is responsible for implementing all district policies, a board of education should never meet without the superintendent in attendance. Only if an emergency or vacation prevents him from being there, or if the board is conducting preliminary discussions of his evaluation and salary, should he be excused.

As the executive officer of the school district, the superintendent is responsible for administering the policies adopted by the school board. He carries out their decisions as approved in public meetings. Board members do not get involved in the day-to-day running of the schools. Perhaps the greatest source of friction between boards and superintendents arises from a board's failure to understand the difference between policy and administration. Although the line is an elusive one, as we discussed in Chapter I, generally the board establishes the principles and goals they wish the school system to be guided by and leaves the superintendent free to follow those principles and achieve those goals in the manner he thinks most effective. The board should require, of course, that he keep them informed on a regular basis as he carries out the board's decisions. Progress reports should be a regular item on meeting agendas. The board must be provided with continuing information so they can tell whether the policies they have adopted and the actions they have taken are the right ones for the district or whether they need to make changes.

As the executive officer, the superintendent should be familiar with the duties and job descriptions of his subordinates, but he should not be doing their work. Just as the board's realm is policy development, so the superintendent's is general administration. He should concentrate on the overall operation of the district, liaison with outside agencies, and long range planning for the schools.

The superintendent is also the educational leader of the community. He should be active in professional organizations, keep aware of current ideas in education, and take the initiative in bringing worthwhile issues to the attention of the board and citizens. He is the spokesman for the district in contacts with the state department of education. He should encourage local clubs and PTAs to have him speak at their meetings.

Board members should not resent this public side of the superintendent's job. It is part of what they pay him for. He has the expertise and the experience from a career in education to represent the board in discussions of educational and district-related issues. The public relations function of a superintendent can be as important to the smooth running of a district as his more quotidian duties.

In the long run, the measure of an effective superintendent is not that he is superior in all aspects of his responsibilities, but rather that he has the ability to supplement his strengths and buttress his weaknesses with other members of his staff, and that he has the trust and confidence of his board.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIAL

New Jersey statutes recognize four titles or categories for school business officials: board secretary, business manager, school business administrator, and assistant superintendent for business. The position of board secretary is often combined with one of the other three positions.

Board Secretary

All boards of education are required by law to have a board secretary. There are no legal qualifications for this position. Some superintendents serve in a dual capacity as board secretary; a few board members have taken on the responsibilities, though they are not allowed to receive compensation; but in most districts the board secretary is the business official. In those capacities, he reports directly to the board as board secretary and to the superintendent as the business official.

It is the secretary's responsibility to notify board members of all meetings and to insure that the Sunshine Law requirements regarding meeting notifications are followed. He serves as the general accountant for the board, collecting all monies and sending them to the treasurer of school monies for deposit. He keeps all accounts of the district's financial transactions and is responsible for presenting all such information to the board—from bill lists to quarterly and annual audits. When authorized by the board, he may make purchases or negotiate and award contracts for services or supplies where the annual cost does not exceed $7,500.

He provides the board with a detailed report of its financial transactions at the close of each fiscal year and files a copy with the county superintendent. Annually, he reports to the commissioner of education the amount of unpaid school debt, the interest rate payable, and the due

dates of bonds or other indebtedness.

The board secretary may administer oaths and, in that capacity, swears in all new and returning board members at the organization meeting. He also chairs that meeting initially, takes the nominations for board president, and swears him/her in before turning the meeting over to the new presiding officer. The board secretary is responsible for conducting all school elections. He receives petitions, conducts the drawing for position, ascertains all polling equipment is in place and working, and tallies and verifies the vote. He records all proceedings of the board and of school elections in a suitable minute book.

Business Manager

Type I school districts may appoint a business manager. There are no statutory qualifications for this position, which entitles the holder to a non-voting seat on the board and the right to speak on all matters related to his functions. The business manager is in charge of the repair and maintenance of facilities and grounds and reports monthly to the board concerning progress in those areas.

School Business Administrator

In Type II districts with 25 or more full-time teachers, the board may seek to establish the position of school business administrator. The request and justification for establishing the position is submitted to the county superintendent, who forwards it to the commissioner and state board of education for approval. Districts with less than 25 teachers may join together to appoint a school business administrator.

Statutory qualifications for this position state that holders must meet certification requirements, which include a bachelor's degree based upon a four-year curriculum at an accredited institution and a New Jersey instructional certificate and three years of appropriate teaching experience; or business training and experience approved by the state board of examiners and successful completion of a college curriculum approved by the department of education; or 30 semester-hour credits in several areas of study. Several additional means of achieving certification are described in state board of education policies.

Persons holding this position assist in the planning and preparation of the annual school budget, as well as long term planning in terms of community resources and needs. They recruit personnel for positions in the area of school business management, are responsible for the operation of the food services program, transportation services, and district insurance programs. In addition, they would also be responsible for the same areas as the business manager.

Assistant Superintendent for Business

The authority for establishing the position of assistant superintendent for business is found in Title 18A, which provides for the appointment of all assistant superintendents regardless of area of assignment. This position is most often found in larger districts. A master's degree in business or school administration is required along with three years' experience in teaching or as a board secretary or school business administrator. Successful completion of a college curriculum approved by the department of education is also a necessity. Duties are those prescribed by the district superintendent with the approval of the board of education. Generally, they are similar to those of the school business administrator and are often combined with those of a board secretary.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD ATTORNEY

The laws governing school districts have become increasingly complex in recent years. Not only rules and regulations, but legislation and court decisions relating to education have been multiplying at a geometric rate. It is not possible for a board member or administrator to keep up with and understand all the legal implications of these mandates.

Every school district, no matter how small, should retain a knowledgeable school attorney to advise them on legal questions. It may be tempting to use a board member who happens to be an attorney, but education law is as specialized as tax or divorce law. An attorney not working regularly in the field will not be familiar enough with current rulings to be valuable to a board of education.

Attorneys can be hired on a yearly retainer which includes all legal services, on a limited retainer with an agreement that the board will pay more for unusual services, or on a purely pay-for-services-rendered basis. Boards will differ on the need to have their attorney present at all public meetings. Certainly, no contracts should be approved without the board attorney reviewing them. Boards who are dealing with controversial issues might want to have the attorney in attendance at meetings as a reference should community members challenge board actions. Board attorneys should certainly review board policies before their adoption.

Remember, the most important benefit of having a board attorney is to prevent errors. Many legal problems can be avoided if advice is sought before, not after, action is taken. Finally, legal advice is just that—advice. The board must take all aspects of a situation into account when they make their decisions. There may be educational, personal, or policy reasons for not doing what their attorney recommends, particularly when the legal picture is unclear. When your attorney says, "This is the law", however, his advice should be followed.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD MEMBER IN RELATION TO STAFF

Board members take their place on local boards with different knowledge about and experience with the district's staff. Some may have children who have gone through all grade levels; they have been active in the PTA and become friendly with administrators and teachers along the way. Others may be unfamiliar with the staff and administrators except for the superintendent. In either situation, it is important that school board members make an effort to familiarize themselves with their school system. You should take the time to meet with the principals, find out what their educational philosophies are, and how they implement those ideas in their schools.

While briefings from the superintendent and board president will give much information to new board members, some things can best be learned by visiting the schools.

But how to visit the schools? Do you just drop in? Do you ask the superintendent's permission? The answer to both questions is "no." You do not just drop in at a school nor do you need permission to visit. You may wish to tell the superintendent that you are interested in visiting the schools and talking with the principals individually and ask him to make arrangements when it is convenient for you and the principals. Or you can call the principals directly and set up an appointment. At the high school level, you may also want to talk with department chairpersons about the offerings in their particular areas. If you make your own appointments, you should tell the superintendent, as a matter of courtesy, that you are visiting the schools.

New members may have long standing personal or social relations with various staff members in the district. Their next-door neighbor with whom they have been friendly for years may be an administrator or school secretary. It is important to realize that, while you as the new member may not think anything has changed in these relationships, the staff members involved will. As much as you may dislike the idea, you are no longer just their next-door neighbor or tennis partner or car-pool friend—you are a board of education member and they will begin to relate to you that way. Only if you accept this, understand it, and learn how to deal with it, will you be able to continue to meet with them in a relaxed and open manner. In the long run, if you don't change, they won't either.

It should be emphasized here, again, that even though staff and community members may see you as a board member, you have no legal status in that role except when sitting with the other board members in a formal meeting. And though you may be tempted to comment to those you know about ideas you may have for changes or improvements, don't. Neither should you visit schools with the idea of evaluating any person or program. You are there only as a student yourself—to learn more about this district you are now serving. The information you gain will serve you

in the future as background to matters you will be discussing.

STAFF EVALUATION

Evaluating staff is probably the most important part of an administrator's or supervisor's job. Evaluations should encourage professional excellence, set goals to improve skills, and provide a basis for the review of the past year's performance and goal achievement. A properly written evaluation should tell the person being evaluated how well he has accomplished the goals given him last year, what the goals will be for the coming year, what areas of performance are above average, what areas need improvement, and what help will be provided in order to aid him in making that improvement. The evaluation should include specific instances which the supervisor has observed as indicators of the various comments in the evaluation. An evaluation should be a positive document, used to improve the performance of the staff member.

In order to do an effective job, those doing evaluations must have accurate, up-to-date job descriptions for those being evaluated. If they don't know what a person is supposed to be doing, how can evaluators determine whether or not he is doing it well? If a person in a position is not sure what is required of him, how can he make an effort to carry out the responsibilities better? Copies of job descriptions for every position in the school district should be available to board members. Such descriptions should be reviewed on a regular basis, in consultation with those in the jobs, to insure they are current and useful. Because of this managerial need for review and possible change, job descriptions should never be included in negotiated contracts.

After the administrators and supervisors have completed their evaluations and made their recommendations to the superintendent, what next? Where does the board of education fit into the evaluation process? The law requires that non-tenured staff members be notified by April 30 whether they will be rehired for the following year. Thus the superintendent must recommend to the board the names of those he wants to rehire and those he wishes to let go prior to that date so that the board has time to discuss his recommendations before voting on them. In addition, if there are any tenured staff whom the superintendent wishes to put on probation or for whom he wishes to withhold an increment and/or raise, such recommendations also must come to the board early enough for them to make a decision and vote prior to April 30.

Boards should review carefully such recommendations. They must realize, however, that they are lay persons and that the evaluations have been made by trained professionals. Generally speaking, only if there are factual reasons for disapproving any of the superintendent's recommendations should the board do so.

Some board members may have received complaints about certain staff members from the community. When there are many complaints about a particular person, it is natural to wonder whether that person should be disciplined or let go. During closed session discussions about personnel, board members may want to repeat such complaints to the superintendent. Do feel free to ask him whether he thinks they are valid and what the reasons are for his response, but do also take his evaluation as the one to be followed unless the facts of the situation are truly out of line with his assessment.

Should board members actually read staff evaluations themselves? You certainly have a legal right to see them, but not usually the need. Only if the board has a problem with one of the superintendent's recommendations should they ask to see the actual evaluation. Such review should take place at a closed session board meeting. Personnel files should never be sent out in board packets.

Board members should be familiar with the staff evaluation process used in their district. Ask your superintendent for sample evaluations and take the time to discuss with him how they are completed and used in determining staff needs. You should inquire, also, how inservice programs relate to the demonstrated needs of staff for improvement of teaching and administrative skills.

Maintaining a high quality staff is important. Demanding effective and accurate evaluations of this staff from administrators and supervisors is the best way for a board to insure high quality is being maintained. And insisting that the superintendent evaluate principals and supervisors on their evaluation abilities—and including that as a yearly goal for him—will help.

THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Building principals should be as much a part of the district's management as central office personnel. Their position on the district firing line should be recognized. Principals are usually the first to be contacted by parents and students with complaints and concerns. They are the people most responsible for carrying out the terms and conditions agreed to in negotiations. They know where the strengths and weaknesses of the system are.

Principals got their jobs because they were master teachers. Having been promoted because of their knowledge and skills, their views on personnel, curriculum, and contract items should be solicited and accepted with as much consideration as that of the central office staff. They know what works and what doesn't work in the schools and their input should be included in the information gathered for board decisions on issues relevant to them.

A school system is a whole made up of its parts—the individual schools. The managers of those schools should be considered part of the management team governing the district.

SELECTING A SUPERINTENDENT

The day comes in the life of every board of education, though not necessarily in the term of every board member, when a new superintendent of schools must be selected. The selection of a superintendent is the most important decision any board of education will make. The role of the superintendent in terms of board, community and staff relations, educational leadership, financial management, and curriculum development and evaluation makes selection of the right person for each district of paramount importance. But how do you proceed?

First, the board must identify those long and short range goals they want their new superintendent to work toward. They need to decide what professional credentials and personal characteristics they want. A salary range must be determined and timelines for the search set.

The board will need to decide whether to do the search themselves or to hire a consultant to help them. The New Jersey School Boards Association can help here. Their field service representatives will do as little or as much as a board desires in conducting a search for a new chief school administrator. The actual search requirements can be arduous. Ads, brochures and applications must be developed; criteria set forth for those who will make it to the interviews; completed applications must be screened and interviewees determined; the interview format must be developed and questions decided upon.

After the first interviews are conducted, determination must be made about which candidates will get a second interview. References and credentials must be carefully checked. Second interview format and questions must be put together. When the board is down to two or three finalists, arrangements must be made for visitations to their districts.

Finally, the board must make their selection, negotiate an employment contract which protects both sides, and announce and introduce the successful applicant to their community. You can see why help is often required.

The entire process takes six months on the average, though it can run as long as a year. And, if none of the applicants fits the board's needs, the whole process may have to be repeated, starting with a readvertisement of the opening.

The hiring of a new superintendent is one of two actions a board takes where an effort should be made to achieve consensus. (The other is approval of the budget.) If at all possible, the board should be unanimous in its selection. This unanimity tells the community that the board is agreed

that its selection is the best and that the members wholeheartedly welcome their new superintendent with their undivided support.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

We have already discussed the fact that an individual board member has no power or authority except when sitting with the rest of the board in a duly authorized meeting. While you may understand this, your friends, acquaintances and townspeople will not. During your campaign and afterward, you have received complaints about various aspects of the school system. As a board member, the complainers expect you to have the power to take care of the problem. If they were supporters, they will expect you to want to. What to do?

All boards should have a chain of command, either written or unwritten, in their district. Probably the first thing which should be explained to new members is that policy. When used properly, the chain of command improves communication, aids in finding amicable solutions to misunderstandings and leaves the board of education free to act as final arbiter on issues which have not been resolved at other steps in the chain. The normal chain runs from the classroom teacher, through the principals, to central office administrators and the superintendent, and, finally, to the board. Members of the public would rather go right to the top. Rarely do they understand that going directly to a board member interferes with administrative prerogatives and hurts staff morale.

So what should you do when approached by a parent with a problem? First, you should listen! Having determined where the problem lies, the proper procedure for working within channels can be told to the parent and the recommendation made that such procedure be followed. People will tell you, "*I* can't go to the teacher (or principal). If *I* complain, they will take it out on my child." It is, unfortunately, an unshakable belief held by many that bringing a concern to a staff member will cause that person to unleash anger on the complainant's child. This is an unfortunate belief because it is untrue!

Tell the person who repeats this cliche to you that another adage is a truer one, "It is the squeaky wheel that gets the grease." The parents who come in to talk say by their presence that they care what happens to their child. That child will be seen to by staff. It is, after all, human nature to pay attention to those you feel are paying attention to you. The effective parent, of course, comes to any discussion, no matter the cause, calmly and with as open a mind as possible in the particular situation. And you, as a board member, should tell them this.

Decide, with the person speaking with you, who is closest to the problem. Then have him go to that person with his problem. Most often there will be no need to go further.

When someone brings a problem to you, however, that concerns the district as a whole and which you think is valid, your function as a policy maker becomes relevant. By contacting the board president, such concerns might be appropriately put on a meeting agenda for discussion by the whole board or a board committee. The discussion could result in new or revised policies being adopted.

Staff members also may come to you with complaints—either because you are friends or because they think you will be sympathetic. Here, even more than with citizens, you must not allow yourself to get involved. Staff have contractual grievance procedures to follow. If board members attempt to go around these legal processes, the result can be morale problems for staff, a lack of credibility for administrators, a lack of trust for the board, and lawsuits for unfair labor practices. Involving oneself with personnel matters outside of a regular board meeting is one of the most regrettable examples of a board member crossing the line from policy making to administration.

Remember, getting involved in problems below the level of the board of education is not an individual board member's job. Become familiar with the chain of command in your district and see that everyone uses it.

CURRICULUM 4

It is a rare board of education that spends as much time as they should discussing curriculum. School boards exist to govern schools. Schools exist to educate children. And curriculum is the vehicle by which children learn. Board members must be aware of what their students are being taught. You must take an active role in determining the goals for the district's curriculum and you must ensure that those goals are being achieved in the classrooms.

Boards of education have three fundamental responsibilities in the area of curriculum. First, they must approve what is to be taught. Second, they should make sure that what is supposed to be taught is actually being learned. Third, they should make sure that the resources needed for learning are available and being used effectively. The first is a statutory responsibility. The second relates to the board's governance responsibility—if the schools are not doing their job, the board must find out why not and do something about it. And the third is a fiscal responsibility requiring boards to provide budgetary funds so that the staff can effectively carry out the curricular goals.

The education laws of New Jersey put the burden of overseeing curriculum squarely on school boards. *N.J.S.A.* 18A:33-1 says, "...no course of study shall be adopted or altered except by the recorded roll call majority vote of the full membership of the board..." Board members are elected to represent their communities. In passing this law, the Legislature wanted to ensure that board members would have the legal authority to review and approve what their professionals were teaching. Every year, boards must vote in public meeting to approve all curriculum being used in their classrooms. No change in curriculum can be made during the year without the board's prior approval in public meeting.

In addition, *N.J.S.A.* 18A:34-1 says, "Textbooks shall be selected by the recorded roll call majority vote of the full membership of the board..." This law covers all books which will be required reading in any of the district's courses. It does not apply to books purchased for school libraries nor to reading lists from which students may select books.

How are these laws carried out? In some districts, the superintendent's curriculum recommendations are rubber stamped by the board. Many boards never relate their curricula to district goals, others are unaware of curriculum objectives, and few inquire how their administrators will

know whether the students have learned anything from the courses taken. In other words, boards follow the letter of the law—they vote publicly on curriculum, but they do not follow the intent of the law—they don't make sure that their vote is an informed one.

Why do some boards operate in this manner in the area of curriculum when they would never do it in other areas? For example, if a superintendent came to his board in January, said he had completed the budget, said it called for a total expenditure of $9,264,496.28, and and asked them to approve it—what would the board do? Why, they would ask for background information; they would demand a line item breakdown; and they would want to know why monies were being spent in various areas and what alternatives there were for savings on the tax dollar. Yet superintendents come to boards and say, "This is the new curriculum for 5th grade math and these are the books we will use. Please approve them." Do the boards ask what criteria was used in selecting the books? Do they inquire as to course objectives and what changes have been made from last year's course? Do they ask how the administration will know at the end of the year whether the 5th graders have learned what they were supposed to have learned? Probably not.

Why does this happen? Mostly because neither boards nor superintendents know what information board members need to make curricular decisions. They want to be involved but they don't know how to go about it. But it's not difficult.

The following information should be included in all curriculum recommendations made by the chief school administrator to the board:

- A statement of district education goals and objectives that the recommended program is designed to meet or improve if the recommendation is a change in an existing course.
- A statement on how the course, if a revision, improves upon the old course now in use.
- The cost of the new program or revision, including personnel and materials, and long-range projections of continuing costs (most important in courses involving computers). The board should know whether the costs are within current budget allotments.
- A description of how staff will measure pupil progress in order to know whether the goals and objectives are being met and whether students have learned what the administration expects them to learn.
- Timelines for the results of the evaluation of the curriculum to be completed and brought to the board for review.

Curriculum guides should be developed for each course or area being taught. In addition to mastery levels expected to be achieved, such guides should include suggested materials and activities designed to achieve these

levels and evaluation criteria to test the extent to which learning objectives have been met. These curriculum guides should be available to board members and citizens.

Recommendations for new courses of study or changes in existing courses usually come from the district staff working in curriculum committees. These committees are made up of teachers, principals and, sometimes, community members. The report they send to the superintendent when making their recommendations includes their rationale for change, the objectives the new or revised course is meant to achieve, the materials and texts to be used, and the evaluative criteria to determine whether the change has really improved learning. The superintendent needs all this information in order to decide whether to forward the committee's recommendation on to the board. When doing so, he should forward the entire report on to the board along with his approval. Board members will then have a record of the history of the recommendation—need, objectives, materials, evaluation. It requires no extra work on the part of the superintendent; all necessary information already exists in the report of the committee. Board members will be able to make an informed and intelligent decision which they can explain to their constituents.

Schools exist so that students may learn. Overseeing that learning is a board of education's raison d'etre. Don't let it go by default.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS ABOUT CURRICULUM

A board can find itself embroiled in controversy over course materials or individual books which are required reading. Parents sometimes become disturbed by books or assignments brought home by their children. Everyone has read of instances in the United States where people have reacted emotionally to books available in schools or libraries—from book burnings in South Dakota to wholesale banning of authors on Long Island. The chance that disagreement and personal bias could take the place of decisions based on educational need makes the adoption of board policy on selection of textbooks and handling of parent complaints most urgent.

The policy should recognize the right of any district resident to present a request, suggestion or complaint about instructional materials. The policy should make clear, however, that the use of any challenged materials will not be restricted until a final decision on the complaint has been made by the board, and that the criteria for their decision shall be the educational needs and curricular objectives of the district.

Generally speaking, when the chief school administrator brings textbook recommendations to the board for approval, those books have been through much study and evaluation by staff—from teachers and department chairpersons through principals and central office personnel. An individual board member should look long and hard at his personal biases before substituting a layman's opinion for such professional knowledge and experience.

5 STUDENT RIGHTS

In the early days of our country, schools had little problems with students. If they caused any trouble, they were thrown out. Today, due process rights must be accorded students, and these constitutional protections are supported by the courts.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

In 1867, New Jersey became the first state to abolish corporal punishment in the public schools. *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-1 says, "No person employed or engaged in a school...shall inflict or cause to be inflicted corporal punishment upon a pupil..." except to put down a disturbance threatening injury to others, taking weapons away, in self-defense, or to protect others. No other state rushed to follow our lead until 1972 when Massachusetts became the second. Several other states have since passed similar laws. New York City and Chicago are among the few individual districts which forbid physical punishment of students. The Puritan view of the hickory stick method of teaching dies hard.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The United States Constitution protects the rights of students to freedom of speech, even while in school. As explained in NJSBA's book, *Basic School Law*, "In order for a board of education to justify the prohibition of...opinion, it must be able to show that the prohibition was caused by something more than a mere desire to avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that accompany unpopular viewpoints." If the opinion does not strongly interfere with the educational process, it cannot be prevented or punished.

Boards are also cautioned about applying "prior restraint" restrictions to student publications. While boards can establish guidelines and regulations covering printing and distribution, they should not get involved with censoring what can appear in the publication. *Basic School Law* notes that, in a dissent challenging the court's finding that a case was moot because the students had graduated, a New Jersey Supreme Court justice held that any system requiring the prior approval of all materials intend-

ed to be distributed by students is unconstitutional. Only if the materials would create a clear and present danger of disruption could they be withheld. *Basic School Law* continues, "(a) policy which would restrict publication and circulation on school property to literature prepared under school sponsorship and supervision is an unlawful and improper restraint upon students' rights of free expression."

STUDENT RECORDS

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 governs this area. Any information about students kept on file in a school district which can be viewed by another person, no matter how restricted, is considered pupil records. Rules of the state board, developed in accordance with the Act of 1974, regulate who may see these records, what may be included in them, when they should be reviewed and how information in them can be removed.

STUDENT SEARCHES

The privacy of individuals, no matter their age, is also protected by the U.S. Constitution. In 1983, the New Jersey Supreme Court held that the right to privacy covered students even inside a school building. Boards and administrators have the right to maintain a safe environment for staff and pupils, and to discipline those students who are not obeying the rules developed for that purpose. Before a school official can conduct a search of a student's belongings, person or locker, however, that official must have reasonable grounds to believe that the student has something illegal or has been engaging in illegal acts. The official cannot be acting on gossip, rumor, or anonymous information.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

In April 1977, then Secretary of HEW, Joseph A. Califano, Jr., signed regulations which fully implemented Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Public Law 93-112. The act was called "a civil rights act for the disabled". Section 504 states that, "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States...shall, solely, by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The term 'handicapped' includes such diseases or conditions as speech, hearing, visual and orthopedic impairments, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, mental retardation, emotional illness; and specific learn-

ing disabilities such as perceptual handicaps, dyslexia, minimal brain dysfunction, and developmental phasia. In addition, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 governs the requirements for the receipt of federal assistance for handicapped children. New Jersey has incorporated the requirements of both of these federal laws into the state's regulations covering handicapped students.

Districts in New Jersey must identify those students between the ages of five and twenty-one who, because of special needs, will require individualized educational programs in order to progress in school. In addition, since 1983, districts must identify those students between the ages of three and five who would benefit from such special programs and inform the parents of these children what resources are available to them from state and local agencies to help their children until they are old enough to attend school.

The responsibility of boards to see to the education of handicapped students is an important one. Besides identifying such children and determining what special programs they will need, boards must provide such programs without charge, including coverage of non-medical care and room and board where residential placement is required. Handicapped children must be educated with non-handicapped students (mainstreamed) to the maximum extent possible in accordance with an educationally sound program; there must be comparability of facilities, services and activities for the handicapped and nonhandicapped; all educational programs and placement decisions must be discussed with the students' parents and meet with their approval; and due process must be followed at all times. Appeal provisions are included in state regulations, if parents have problems with the school district's decisions.

These are serious responsibilities. As a board member, you owe these special children no less an educational opportunity than you provide to their more fortunate brothers and sisters.

For a full discussion of the above issues and of other student rights, including secret fraternities, flag salutes, vandalism, and dress codes, readers should refer to *Basic School Law*. In addition, boards should always confer with their attorney to ensure they are following current law in any situation where constitutional or legal rights may be involved. Many law suits can be prevented and much money saved if boards ask the right questions of the right people before taking action.

THE BUDGET 6

STATE AID TO LOCAL DISTRICTS

A school budget is the financial expression of a district's educational aspirations for its students. It is probably the single most important item a board will decide upon in a year of decisions.

As a management tool prepared each year to show how a school system's financial resources will be used, the school budget should indicate both revenue sources and expenditures. In New Jersey, local district taxes are the main source of school budget monies.

State aid in New Jersey for elementary and secondary education averages about 40% to local districts. Approximately 6% of this aid covers pension costs, which do not appear in school budgets. The actual percentage of state aid to any individual district can vary from less than 5% to almost 90%. The variation is due to the fact that state aid is equalized in most categories, with poorer districts receiving much more than wealthier districts. The intent is to equalize the resources available for education regardless of a community's own wealth and ability to pay. The amount of equalization aid will also depend on how much a board has decided to spend per pupil. Two districts, otherwise identical, may differ in their amount of state aid because one of them is taxing itself more to provide more for its students.

A board of education can receive revenue from tuition monies coming to them from children attending their schools from other districts. Districts also receive federal monies from the Title programs including P.L. 874 Federal Impact Aid and Title I programs.

Another source of budget revenue is free balance appropriation or surplus. While the state accounting office recommends that boards keep between three and five percent of their budget as surplus, districts can use a part of those funds to help defray the tax call on their community. This use of surplus shows up in the revenue column as a free appropriation balance. Such use of surplus is included when the state figures a district's budget cap for the following year, however, and should be appropriated carefully since it will lower the following year's cap.

A detailed explanation of state aid can be found in the NJSBA's book, *Fundamentals of School Board Membership*, in an article entitled "The

Long Distance Runner: The Board Member Runs A Long, Hard Course of School Finance."

BUDGET CAPS

Budget caps are state mandated limits on the annual increase in a school district's budget. These limits were adopted by the Legislature to control the amount of state aid which would go to districts. Otherwise, it was felt, local districts might increase their budgets at a rate beyond the state's ability to pay. School systems would have, in effect, a blank check on the state treasury. Caps were also intended to ensure property tax relief by keeping school costs down and equalizing educational opportunities for children throughout New Jersey by allowing lower spending districts to increase their expenditures more rapidly than higher spending districts.

LINE ITEM BUDGET

Traditionally, budgets have been developed by boards of education in a line item format and presented in that manner to the public. The chart of accounts, which makes up the line item budget, is divided as follows:

100 Series Administration
200 Series Instruction
300 Series Attendance Services
400 Series Health Services
500 Series Pupil Transportation
600 Series Operation of Plant
700 Series Maintenance of Plant
800 Series Fixed Charges
900 Series Food Services
1000 Series Student Body Activities
1100 Series Community Services
1200 Series Capital Outlay
1300 Series Debt Service

Not all budgets will include monies in all areas. In New Jersey very few districts carry monies under the 1100 Series. The largest account in all budgets will be the 200 Series, which includes teachers' salaries. In some districts, the 500 Series will be the next largest since busing falls in that account. Fixed Charges, the 800 Series, is one of the most rapidly increasing portions of school budgets due to the tremendous rise in in-

surance costs.

The 1200 Series, or Capital Outlay, is voted on separately from the other or current expense portions of the budget. Capital Outlay covers any expenditures which result in the acquisition of fixed assets or additions to fixed assets. These would include monies for land, improvements of grounds, building construction, and remodeling or additions to buildings. Depending on the individual district's desires, this account can be a few thousand or several hundred thousand dollars in a given year.

The 1300 Series, Debt Service, is, by state law, part of the advertised school budget although it is not voted on by the community. It includes principal and interest due on referenda previously approved by the voters to construct new schools, put additions on or repair existing buildings, or otherwise involve the board in contracted debts. Districts which have recently had to expand will likely have a large Debt Service account, while those systems who have almost completed paying off their schools will have a small account, dropping rapidly toward zero.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

Budgets are not just inventions of a board of education and its superintendent. All personnel in the district have input. Budget discussions between teachers and principals in elementary schools, within departments in high schools, and among custodians for maintenance needs should begin in the spring. Principals develop budgets for their schools from this staff input for review by the central administration.

Central office administrators go over the recommendations they receive from their principals including requests for new programs, new textbooks, and recommendations for building repairs and grounds upkeep. They develop a total budget to bring to the board, supported by explanatory data which relates the budget items to district goals and objectives. This information should be brought to the board for beginning deliberations in late October or early November. Through the next several months, boards will carefully discuss each of the line items—keeping those items they think are important to a good school system and eliminating those which will cost more than they are worth to the schools.

The board's discussions should not be a pro forma exercise. Boards should insist that their administration provide them with enough information so that their decisions about the budget are informed ones. Citizens will want to know why money is being spent in some areas and not in others. Board members must be able to respond to such questions, and they can only do so if they have been provided with the information from their superintendent.

The budget affects not only those families with children in the schools, but the entire community. Boards must balance the educational needs of the children as delineated by their staff with the ability of their district

to support those needs. Tough choices often have to be made. Boards will hear from people with different views. "We need more librarians." "We have too many administrators." "Why don't we have more girls' sports?" "There should be a nurse in every school." "Classes are too large." "Why do we need sports...or driver education...or art or music?"

While considering all opinions, including their own desire to keep the tax rate down, board members must remember that their first consideration must be the provision of an effective education for all the students in their schools. From the background information provided them by the superintendent, combined with state and federal aid figures and an understanding of their own goals and objectives, boards can strike the balance that will provide a good education for their students with a reasonable tax call on their communities.

BUDGET APPROVAL

After a board has gone through the long, careful process necessary to develop a budget which meets the needs of their school system and which they think is within the community's ability to pay, they must get this budget approved.

If the board is an appointed one, a Type I district, this will done by a board of school estimate made up of two school board members, two members of the governing body of the municipality, and the mayor or chief executive officer of the town. This board will approve the budget as submitted or make changes, and certify the amount of appropriation to the board of education and the governing body of the municipality. The latter body will include the amount certified in its tax ordinance.

If the board is an elected one, a Type II district, budget approval is determined by the voters of the community. The board presents its recommended budget to the public at a hearing held for that purpose. The public hearing is mandated by law, even though most of the board's deliberations over the past several months have been held in public meetings under the Sunshine Law. At election time, along with voting on members for the board of education, the voters will approve or disapprove the budget.

If the voters turn down the budget, the governing body of the municipality reviews it, and can either leave it as is based on the information given them by the board in defense of the budget amount, or they can reduce it by the amount they feel is in keeping with the action of the voters. If they wish to reduce the budget, they must, by law, indicate specifically which areas are to be cut and by how much.

In both Type I and Type II districts, if the board does not agree with the overseeing body's decision, they may appeal any cuts to the commissioner of education. He can leave the amount as set by the governing body, he can order it increased to what the board of education was asking for, or he can place it at any amount in between. He will make the final deter-

mination based on what he believes is necessary for a thorough and efficient education for the district's students as laid out in the board's written goals and objectives.

Budget defeats can be wrenching on a board. All of their time and effort, plus the time and effort of their administrators and staff, may seem put to naught by the concern of the public about their taxes. People do care about education and about the education of children. Differences of opinion arise when discussion turns to what is necesary to a good education and what is a frill. Boards should gather all necessary information, discuss what the district's needs are, develop a budget based on those needs, explain as best they can to the voters what they have done and why, and then hope those responsible for approving the budget will support what has been done.

BUILDINGS AND MAINTENANCE 7

The 700 Series covers maintenance of buildings and contracted services for upkeep, repair and replacement of non-curricular equipment. This account, unfortunately, is too often the first to be cut when boards are reviewing budget items. It is unfortunate because maintenance needs do not go away—they just get worse. And, the repair item which might cost $10,000 this year will probably cost $15,000 next year and $20,000 the year after for the same amount of work.

Boards of education are responsible for a multi-million dollar system of buildings. They should think of these buildings and their maintenance the way industry does. Not only is it important to keep up with the minor repair and replacement items which crop up during the year, but a carefully planned and budgeted program of long-range school preventive maintenance should be an on-going part of every system.

Too many school maintenance programs are reactive instead of preventive. Boards tend to "put out fires" instead of planning ahead to forestall flareups. Crisis practices are not financially or educationally sound. You wouldn't put a curriculum together that way. You can imagine the community's reaction if a board waited until reading and math scores were hitting bottom before instituting needed remedial and basic skills programs.

Just as assessment of educational goals and development of objectives to meet those goals are necessary (and mandated by the T&E Law), so is the assessment of present and future maintenance needs and the development of a long-range plan which includes budget implications. Efficient and reliable building operations are essential to the health, safety and comfort of pupils and teachers. Comfortable and safe buildings enhance the educational program and improve staff morale.

Preventive maintenance procedures can avert such incidents as the one reported by a student who wrote to her local paper in New Jersey complaining about "rats and mice falling out of (the classroom) ceiling." Or, more seriously, eliminate equipment failures which caused a student to be electrocuted in a science laboratory in Michigan. School supplies and buildings take especially hard wear and tear due to the nature and age of their users. Buying cheap is often more expensive in the long run. Good materials and supplies are worth their extra cost in the life of their operation and minimal need for repairs.

What can boards do to insure that their school plants are in top condition, their grounds in good repair, and their materials and supplies of a quality which will benefit the educational program?

First, boards must decide that preventive school maintenance is important. They must stop reacting to problems after they occur—accepting bids in a crisis situation or making 'bandage' repairs so that the school program can continue without interruption. The business administrator and/or superintendent must be instructed to develop a long-range plan for the board's approval so that policies can be adopted supporting a preventive maintenance program.

Second, the board should evaluate what procedures will be used in the district to assess needs, make repairs, and take care of grounds upkeep. Not only must procedures be developed and written down so that all involved are aware of them, but inservice training sessions for custodial personnel are recommended. The custodial staff should be involved in developing the procedures since they will be implementing them.

A handbook covering all aspects of the maintenance and operation of building and grounds, including preventive operations, should be developed, and regular meetings with operational staff held to cover possible problem areas before they develop.

Third, after adopting policies and procedures to implement those policies, the board must put their money where their mouth is. They must back up their planning in the budget.

Capital outlay for building repair and maintenance must not be used to 'balance' the rest of the budget or be cut to provide an acceptable tax call. If major repairs are deferred, remodeling unheard of, and materials cut to the bone, the long-range plan will once again become a crisis instrument.

A 1976 study showed that average school maintenance needs divide roughly into the following areas:

- Repair of buildings—58% of maintenance budget
- Repair of equipment—13% of maintenance budget
- Equipment replacement—10% of maintenance budget
- Grounds upkeep—19% of maintenance budget

Boards might use this study as a rule of thumb in dividing up the monies they allocate to their 700 Series.

As money gets tighter and voters become unwilling to approve increased taxes, it becomes more and more important that boards stress long-range planning in all budget areas. Maintenance is no less important than personnel and curriculum. If the roof is falling in, if the windows are leaking, if the grounds are potted and filled with rocks, the educational program cannot help but suffer. Certainly student and staff morale will be affected. A long-range plan of preventive maintenance, with budgetary items spread out evenly over a period of years, will go a long way toward avoiding emergency situations.

8 LABOR RELATIONS

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Although school board members are elected or appointed to make policy decisions concerning the operation of their districts, they function under many constraints. One of the most significant is the obligation of school boards to bargain in good faith with organizations representing school personnel over wages, hours and working conditions. Over 99% of New Jersey teachers and a great proportion of support personnel belong to bargaining units. In comparison, less than 25% of private sector employees are union members. Approximately 65% of an average district's budget is reflected in salaries with another 10-15% for fringe benefits. Almost all of these wages and benefits are determined through collective negotiations.

The object of collective bargaining is to reach a contract. The purpose of the contract is to limit the ability of management to take certain kinds of actions. Think about that statement! The purpose of a labor contract is to limit the ability of management to take certain kinds of actions. All labor contracts are restrictive on the employer. Successful negotiations limits these restrictions. Contracts, once signed, are almost impossible to change, so even the smallest item should not be agreed to lightly.

The board's obligation to bargain collectively with its employees does not extend to certain positions. These include the superintendent, assistant superintendents and confidential employees. The latter are defined as school district staff who regularly and consistently perform duties of a confidential nature in the area of labor relations or personnel relations. Usually, they are secretaries who type memos, contracts, disciplinary reviews and other related tasks.

Employee organizations and employers must negotiate in good faith concerning terms and conditions of employment. Wages, fringe benefits and hours are obviously terms and conditions. Other areas may not be as easily categorized, however. In August 1978, the New Jersey Supreme Court, in a case involving the Ridgefield Park School District, declared illegal many areas of negotiations previously deemed permissive by PERC.

The legal requirement to bargain in good faith, however, does not mean that on any given topic either party must make a concession. As

long as a party is open to suggestions and as long as they want to reach a mutual agreement with the other party, saying "no" is still considered bargaining in good faith.

PERC

PERC is the Public Employment Relations Commission, a state agency responsible for overseeing those labor relations which involve public employers and employees. As such, it conducts elections to determine who the majority representative of employees is, determines whether either employer or employee organizations have committed unfair practices, determines what topics may be negotiated, and assists the parties in reaching contract settlements through the use of mediators and fact finders when necessary. The commission is made up of seven members: two labor representatives, two employer representatives and three neutrals. One of the neutrals is the chairman of the commission.

NEGOTIATING TEAM

Negotiations is an adversarial process. Both sides must understand this and the whole process of bargaining in order to represent their side's viewpoint effectively. The purpose of negotiations is to produce a contract with which both sides can live. Rarely is either side totally pleased with the outcome. This adversarial relationship can be disconcerting to those not familiar with negotiations. Since people rarely do well in those areas with which they are neither familiar nor comfortable, it is very important that boards choose their negotiating team carefully. It is particularly vital that the spokesperson be experienced and knowledgeable in the area of public sector negotiations.

Chief spokespersons for boards fall into three main categories: board members, outside professionals, or trained administrators. In small districts particularly, boards may appoint one of their members to be their negotiations spokesperson. Since board members cannot be paid, that can mean a savings of several thousand dollars. However, unless such persons' regular jobs includes public sector negotiations, they are most likely not as well trained nor as familiar with the constantly changing laws and PERC decisions as is someone from the other two categories.

Some boards hire an outside, professional negotiator. These lawyers or labor relations consultants specialize in collective bargaining for boards of education and municipalities. They will charge by the hour or a flat fee, but their expertise and experience is often worth the money spent. Seemingly cost-free items, agreed to by inexperienced bargainers, can turn out to be very expensive for the district in future years.

For those districts who have the staff, the ideal person is a central

office administrator trained to handle negotiations. This administrator should not be the superintendent, but perhaps an assistant superintendent or administrative coordinator. The advantages of an in-house person handling negotiations are many. He is familiar with the district and its concerns; he works throughout the year with the principals and knows their problems; he will be responsible for administering the contract and so will know better than to agree to items that might be troublesome later; and he will handle grievances at the administrative level and thus will be familiar with contract weaknesses when the next year's round of negotiations begins. He may also be responsible for tuition reimbursements, requests for sabbaticals, and all personnel matters growing out of contractual agreements. Such familiarity and year-round experience cannot be gained by any board member or outside professional.

The negotiating team should never be made up of a majority of the board members. It could be held that agreements made by such a team are binding on the board as a whole. Rather, the team should consist of less than a majority, whose job is to negotiate and bring back their recommendations and tentative agreements to the whole board for approval and ratification.

DETERMINING PARAMETERS

No individual board member has the right, responsibility or authority to determine contractual items prior to or during negotiations. The board as a whole determines what proposals they will bring to the table and what responses their negotiating team will make to the employee organization's proposals. These latter items can be tentatively listed as acceptable, unacceptable, or possible—pending the actual negotiations sessions. NJSBA's Labor Relations Department would be the first to tell a board that the cardinal rule of negotiations is, "Never say never." Leave your team negotiating room. Changes will be necessary during the negotiations process, and the team will make frequent reports to the rest of the board. Only basic parameters and money totals should be established at the beginning by the whole board.

Negotiations is one of the listed exemptions under the Sunshine Law, and board discussions of team selection, parameters, and employee demands should be held in closed session. Obviously, if the employee organization knew what the board limits were, it would never agree to anything less.

MEDIATION AND FACT FINDING

When the board is unable to reach an agreement with a bargaining unit, an impasse is declared. This does not mean that the board's team has

negotiated poorly. Indeed, they are most probably simply refusing to give in to demands which are either too expensive or would overly diminish the board's management prerogatives. When an impasse is declared, both sides call upon PERC to send them a mediator. This mediator is a neutral person, employed by the state or by PERC, to assist public employers and employee organizations in reaching agreement. Mediators have no power to force an agreement. They use techniques gained through years of experience to redirect the parties, cut through bargaining rhetoric and personalities, and suggest new ways of compromise that may bring about an agreement. They are not interested in right or wrong, good or bad for the district. They are only interested in getting an agreement.

If mediation fails, the parties may go on to fact finding. A fact finder, also supplied by PERC, will hold a formal hearing on the items in dispute. Fact finders make a determination of the settlement they believe most appropriate, which may be some middle ground between the two sides. It is not a finding of fact. Like mediators, fact finders have no power to force a settlement. If fact finding does not resolve the dispute, there is no other remedy employed by PERC. Generally, the parties go back to the bargaining table and continue, sometimes into the next school year, and occasionally, into the school year two years hence.

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

Once a contract has been agreed to and ratified by both parties, it is binding upon the district and all those covered by it or empowered to implement it.

All principals, department heads and supervisors should be made thoroughly familiar with the contract and its provisions. Poor contract administration is a major cause of staff grievances and low morale. Training for district personnel responsible for carrying out the contract should be a mainstay of administrative inservice programs. Improper administration can bring arbitration decisions against a district which can erode management credibility and cost money.

All district administrators should keep careful note of those contract areas which cause them difficulty or which they think ill-advised. The superintendent should be sure that the bargaining team is aware of these items and that they attempt to adjust the next contract accordingly.

TENURE

All personnel who are required to have appropriate certificates to hold their jobs are protected by New Jersey's tenure laws. Tenure may also be granted at a board's discretion to personnel not required to hold certificates—such as custodians. Generally speaking, an employee earns tenure in a

district, after employment for three consecutive years, on the first day of the fourth academic year.

The laws relating to tenure do not limit the right of any board of education to reduce the number of staff members employed in the district. Whenever, in the board's judgment, it is advisable to abolish positions for reasons of economy, because of a reduction in the number of pupils, a change in the administrative organization of the district, or for any other good cause, they may do so. Reduction of tenured staff members must be made on the basis of seniority, according to standards established by the commissioner of education. Staff so dismissed must be placed on a preferred eligibility list for reemployment when vacancies occur.

All non-tenured staff members must be observed and evaluated in the performance of their duties at least three times during each school year. Such evaluations must take place before April 30 of each year, by which date staff must be notified whether their contracts will be renewed or not. Non-tenured staff may be let go on the basis of merit rather than seniority, as required for tenured staff.

No tenured employee of a board may be dismissed except for inefficiency, incapacity, unbecoming conduct or other just cause—and then only after written charges have been preferred against the staff member and a hearing held before the commissioner of education or his designee. To be successful in such a hearing, districts should have at least three years of written evaluations showing that they have set goals for the staff member, worked with him on those goals, and consistently evaluated that staff member as failing to achieve those goals, having provided warnings all along the way.

The most important advice a board member can get regarding tenure is EVALUATE, EVALUATE, EVALUATE! The problem with tenure is not solely with the law, but also with the looseness of evaluations by principals and central office administrators. As in many other areas of life, if you have the facts to prove your case, your chances of doing so are greatly improved.

9 PUBLIC RELATIONS

Board members are often concerned about their image. Unfortunately, this concern sometimes surfaces only at election time. That is much too late. The building of good relations between board and community should be an on-going, year-long, comprehensive process. It should include everyone—from staff to parents to students, from senior citizens to new arrivals in town. Dealing with the community on a crisis basis is as effective as putting out pails under a leak—you may temporarily stop the water from spreading, but you haven't done a thing to fix the rotten roof.

The process by which boards keep their citizens informed is public relations or community relations. The terms can have a Madison Avenue connotation. Schools are perceived by some as 'selling' rather than 'informing' and, indeed, that can be the case.

Public relations should be a two-way street, as recognized in the National School Public Relations Association definition:

> *Educational public relations is a management function which interprets public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual organization with the public interest, and executes a program of action to encourage public involvement and to earn public understanding and acceptance.*

Not only should boards keep their public informed of discussions and actions, but the public should be encouraged to make their voice heard and take part, where appropriate, in the system.

Community relations is also more than just sharing information with those outside the schools. Teachers, principals, secretaries, and custodians need to be kept aware of board policies and measures taken. They deal with and speak to parents on a daily basis. Being uninformed may not stop them from disseminating information as they perceive it when responding to questions. Getting out accurate information and encouraging input should start with the staff.

PERSONAL CONTACT

Surveys investigating public attitudes toward schools, including the Gallup Poll, have shown that the primary source of public information on

education is personal contact with those in the school system. If the public perceives from their contacts that those in the schools are interested in their concerns, open to their suggestions, courteous and helpful when called, their overall impression of the district will be positive.

Board members play an important part in developing this positive impression. The manner in which you conduct yourself at meetings says a lot to those present. Are you courteous to each other and to the members of the public who address you? Do you solicit opinions and recommendations from your administrators? Do you comment on the issues under discussion rather than on the personalities of those involved in the issues? Is there a sense of working together for the school system rather than taking sides for political purposes? A "no" to any of these questions means that the image you are presenting to your public is not the best. If you think there is room for improvement in this area, you might include discussion of board meeting behavior at a board self-evaluation session.

Outside of meetings, you are, of course, in frequent contact with people in the community. They call you with problems and complaints; you meet them in supermarkets and at Rotary and Kiwanis meetings; you see them at PTA functions and on the bus going to work. How you react to their questions and remarks has a lot to do with the impression they form of you and the board as a whole. Promising to take care of a problem is rarely the answer. As discussed earlier, board members have no authority to act as individuals. In most instances, the issue will be administrative and even the board as a whole should not get involved. Again, you should be familiar with the chain of command and be able to tell people who on staff will best be able to help them.

In all of your dealings with the people in your community, an honest concern coupled with a knowledge of your system and how it functions will keep the public's view of the board of education a positive one.

GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

For those townspeople who attend meetings and who take the initiative to call board members or contact them in other ways, that personal contact forms a large part of their impression of the board and the schools. For the rest of the community, however, what they read in the newspaper, hear from their friends, see on television, or receive in the mail forms the basis of their opinion.

In terms of public relations, what has been said here and what will be recommended assumes some basic facts: that your school system is a good one; that it is based on a set of goals which expresses the philosophy of the board and the community; that students who graduate from the schools are prepared to function effectively as citizens; and that the staff is competent and supported with materials and resources necessary to do an effective job. No PR program ever developed will cover up a poor

educational program or hide a badly administered school system. If the schools don't educate well, the communications program won't be successful either.

Having set those basics, there are definite steps a school board can take to let their public know why and how their tax monies are being spent. Boards should publicly commit themselves to a public relations program and be willing to provide the resources and staff necessary to make it work. Depending on the size of the district, a volunteer from one of the PTAs, a staff member hired just for this purpose, or a person in an existing position may be designated as the one in charge. There are always many able people in the schools themselves and many talented citizens in the community who are willing to become involved.

A balanced, effective program should be developed which carries out the district's philosophy and which encourages two-way communication. The media available in the area should be used—newspapers, local radio and television stations, especially cable television which usually has public service channels with time available for local program announcements.

The objectives of a good public relations program are twofold: first, to provide an honest, comprehensive flow of information about the activities of the schools and the policies and actions of the board to the community; and second, to provide a channel through which the concerns of the community are brought to the attention of the proper authorities in the schools. Such a program will help to maintain the town's confidence in the schools, anticipate and forestall problems that come from a lack of accurate information, and emphasize that the schools belong to the community and that all citizens should feel a part of them.

Several good articles on the implementation of successful public relations programs can be found in NJSBA's book, *Fundamentals of School Board Membership.*

Sidney P. Marland, Jr., former assistant secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, has said, "The number one priority facing the schools today is to reinstill public confidence in the public school." Certainly a well-thought-out, well-developed, and well-supported public relations program will help.

NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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A non-profit, state-mandated organization, the New Jersey School Boards Association is a federation of all the state's local school boards. It serves as advocate for the interests of New Jersey's public school students and school districts, and provides inservice training and technical assistance for the state's approximately 5,000 board of education members.

NJSBA works with local board members to provide the best available information, management services and training to assist those members in carrying out their varied and expanding responsibilities. In addition, NJSBA works with other organizations involved in education to further the aims of public education statewide and nationally. NJSBA acts as the voice of the children before our governing bodies in describing how they and their schools will be affected by proposed regulations and legislation.

Services to boards of education, administrators, individual board members, board attorneys, and anyone involved in public education are provided by different departments within the Association.

Information about Association publications can be obtained by calling Business Services. Further information about services available from any department can be obtained from your field service representative.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

The Executive Office is responsible for overall management of all Association operations. These include: keeping the membership informed about all educational theories and practices in districts throughout the state and nation; implementing major policy decisions directed by the Delegate Assembly; providing representation at the Legislature and at meetings, conferences and hearings where board interests are involved; providing liaison with the state department of education and other educational organizations; and presenting the school board point of view to state and national groups.

BUSINESS SERVICES

Business Services is responsible for all of the internal financial operations of the Association. In addition to overseeing the investment portfolio, it acts as liaison with the vice president for finance and reports current financial information to the Association management and board of directors.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Department maintains a continuous flow of information to and from school board members and NJSBA staff, as well as professional educators, officials, media and the general citizenry. Through their publications, they promote effective school public relations programs and encourage local boards to develop and maintain open communications with students, staff and public. The department also seeks to inform citizens about public education by bringing current educational issues and trends to their attention through the media.

FIELD SERVICES

The Field Services Department provides direct services to local boards. They operate from regional locations around New Jersey, with offices in Denville, Hammonton, Marlboro and Trenton. The department also works closely with county school boards associations to help these groups provide regional programs and services in their areas.

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The Governmental Relations Department represents school boards before the state Legislature, the state board of education, Congress, the governor's office and other state and federal agencies involved with public education. The department's lobbyists attend every meeting of the senate, assembly and state board, as well as all meetings of legislative committees which consider bills affecting education. They meet regularly with state legislators to keep them aware of Association positions. All legislation is analyzed for its impact on public schools and boards are kept informed when action is needed to encourage or prevent passage of bills.

INSERVICE EDUCATION

The Inservice Education Department plans, develops, and conducts training and informational conferences, seminars and regional meetings for board members and administrators. Programs and materials are designed to meet needs in the areas of new board member orientation, leadership skills, educational trends, and curriculum, among others. The department is also responsible for conducting the Annual Workshop, a virtual compendium of educational issues. Publications from the department help new and experienced board members and board officers carry out their duties.

INSURANCE

The Insurance Group offers workers compensation insurance and all lines of property and casualty coverage to boards of education. These lines include property, boiler and machinery, inland marine, general liability, errors and omissions, automobile, crime, and umbrella liability.

LABOR RELATIONS

The Labor Relations Department staff maintains the necessary resource data to aid boards in all aspects of the negotiations process. Developments, research and trends in the field are monitored and reported to board members. In conjunction with the Legal Department, they become directly involved in precedent-setting court cases and administrative hearings, particularly in decisions concerning the scope of negotiations. They provide consultation services to boards and will give direct on-site services during strikes. Negotiations services are also available for a fee.

LEGAL

The Legal Department maintains a staff whose primary responsibility is to address the many legal issues facing boards of education. They focus their efforts on issues of statewide importance which are common to all boards. Direct intervention may be called for in those education and labor cases where the precedent set will be of substantial importance statewide. The department also drafts legislation to implement Association objectives and has extensive files for the use of school board attorneys.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The Management Information Department provides materials and assistance to Association committees, local boards, individual board members, and their administrative staffs in four broad categories: general information on problems common to schools; information and advice on policy making; statistical information and research; and in-depth synthesis of information on topics of immediate concern. Their library is open to all board members and their policy service helps boards keep their manual current and workable.

NJSBA's School Board Library Series is designed for you, the local school board member. Each book gives you the know-how—in school law, policy-making, parliamentary procedure, labor and community relations—that's essential to your job of making sure the schools are properly operated.

Other volumes in the series are—

Basic School Law

Policy

Press and Community Relations

Collective Negotiations

The Public Employment Relations Law

Administering the Negotiated Agreement

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